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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

March 6, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
THE DIRECTOR OF DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING
THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
THE ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
THE GENERAL COUNSEL
THE ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Development of Space Systems

Having carefully reviewed the military portion of the national space program, the Deputy Secretary and I have become convinced that it could be much improved by better organization and clearer assignment of responsibility. To this end, I directed the General Counsel of the Department of Defense to obtain your comments on a new draft DOD Directive, "Development of Space Systems."

After careful consideration of the comments and alternate plans that were submitted, the Deputy Secretary and I have decided to assign space development programs and projects to the Department of the Air Force, except under unusual circumstances.

This assignment of space development programs and projects does not predetermine the assignment of operational responsibilities for space systems which will be made on a project by project basis as a particular project approaches the operational stage, and which will take into account the competence and experience of each of the services and the unified and specified commands.

We recognize that all the military departments, as well as other Defense agencies, may have requirements for the use of space equipment. The directive expressly provides that they will continue to conduct preliminary research to develop specific statements of these requirements, and provides a mechanism through which these requirements may be fulfilled.

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Attached is a directive incorporating this decision. We expect all elements of the Department of Defense to support it fully and to help develop the military portion of the national space program in the most effective manner.

Robert S. McNamara

Encl.
DOD Dir. 5160.32